

Wader Quest Articles



SUPPORTING SHOREBIRD CONSERVATION

Registered Charity (England and Wales)
1183748

Wader Quest Objectives:

To raise public awareness about, and to promote an understanding and appreciation of, waders or shorebirds (birds of the sub order Charadrii and to include the family Turnicidae, as defined by the Handbook of Birds of the World Volume 3 del Hoyo, Elliott and Sargatal eds 1996).

To raise funds, which, at the discretion of the Board of Trustees, is to be used to make small grants or carry out appeals for wader conservation projects worldwide.

To promote for the benefit of the public the conservation and protection of waders or shorebirds and improvements of their physical and natural habitats.

To advance the education of the public regarding the conservation and protection of waders or shorebirds and their natural habitats.

To join as a Friend or Sponsor write to:

membership@waderquest.net

For sales (pin badges, earrings, books etc.) write to:

sales@waderquest.net

For more information write to:

info@waderquest.net



Plover Appreciation Day 2020 - By Rick and Elis Simpson

We started the day in a supermarket car park. I know what you are thinking, but actually, in our travels Elis and I have seen many plovers in car parks around the world; Killdeers in the USA, and lapwing species such as Southern in South America, Crowned in South Africa, Red-wattled in India and Masked in Australia. However, you are right, we had no chance of seeing any in this UK car park even though it was right next to Breydon Water, a superb bird watching venue on the Norfolk / Suffolk border in the UK.

We hit the tide just right, low tide, and there were many waders spread across the visible mud, which we began to scan eagerly. We looked first for Grey Plovers, which we expected to see in singles across the flat... not one. Lapwings then, there must be Lapwings? None, and no Golden or Ringed Plovers either.

Our drive across East Anglia to get to the east coast had also resulted in no Lapwings, reminding us of our first day of Wader Quest when we saw none on our way to Titchwell, travelling across the fens; a sad reflection of the dismal state of our farmland birds these days.

We decided to change our location to another part of Breydon water across the river to see if that would change our luck. The light was better from the south side and the birds a bit nearer here. Many Eurasian Curlews, loads of Common Redshanks, a few Dunlins, the odd Black-tailed Godwit and a lone Pied Avocet... that was it. Lamenting our luck and just as we were about to give up completely, a trio of Ringed Plovers arrived at the nearest edge of the mud to us. At last a plover on the list for the day.

We had decided to give Breydon Water a go for a change, rather than go to the safe-bet locations we knew. We now regretted that decision and decided to hot-foot it to Titchwell RSPB reserve on the north Norfolk coast, where we felt sure we would have more luck, there are always loads of plovers there, aren't there?



Southern Lapwing - Elis Simpson



Ringed Plover - Elis Simpson

Breydon Water - Elis Simpson



Plover Appreciation Day 2020 - cont'd

Apparently not, which just goes to show how wild birds can wrong-foot you. A search of the entire reserve at Titchwell produced a small deceit of Lapwings in flight and that was it in terms of plovers.

The lack of birds on the reserve was, in itself, not unusual, birds come and go, but when we got to the beach we found that devoid of waders also. It was not though, hard to see why. Along the edge of the beach were several kite-surfers. Whilst what these people were doing was perfectly legitimate, the affect it had on the waders was upsetting. Few waders were actually present but those that were kept being spooked by the kite as it would swoop and sway in the wind. A lot of fun for the surfers I suspect, but a hindrance to the feeding activities of the waders.



Northern Lapwing
- Elis Simpson

A kite-surfer on Snettisham beach



In desperation we high-tailed it over to Snettisham. There, we caught up with the expected Grey Plovers, loads of them, in different stages of moult. Some in handsome breeding garb, others with well advanced non-breeding plumage in evidence and some juvenile birds too; but we didn't find any Golden Plovers there either. The result being that we only managed three out of the four hoped for plovers for the day. A disappointing result and no mistake.



Grey Plovers - Elis Simpson



Still, the point is we tried, we went out and celebrated the plovers and, as we had to work hard to see them, we really appreciated them all the more.

The serious plight of plovers around the world is the reason for Plover Appreciation Day and we hope that people will sit up and take notice that all is not well in the world of plovers.

By way of consolation for our frustrating day, we did time our visit to Snettisham just right for the high tide spectacular of massed ranks of waders, performing their wonderful inspirations, across the wash. Such an inspiring sight to see and, although we didn't see all of our expected four plover species, the day ended in peace and tranquillity overlooking the wash with the soothing and uplifting sight of tens of thousands of waders doing their thing.



Wrybill



Red-capped Plover



Eurasian Dotterel
- Elis Simpson



Semipalmated Plover



Diademed Sandpiper-Plover

A New Wader Quest Publication - Coming soon!

'This is a cracking read whether you're a waderphile or not. Ticking, dipping, ducking, diving, it's all here as Rick and Elis go through their version of a mid-life crisis to set up Wader Quest. A must-read for all birders.'

- **Iolo Williams:** Naturalist and T. V. presenter.

'Rick and Elis' enthusiasm ripples through this book. What they have achieved, bringing waders to the forefront of people's minds alongside their conservation is second to none. A brilliant read which, like their beloved waders, will have you probing deeper into this amazing family.'

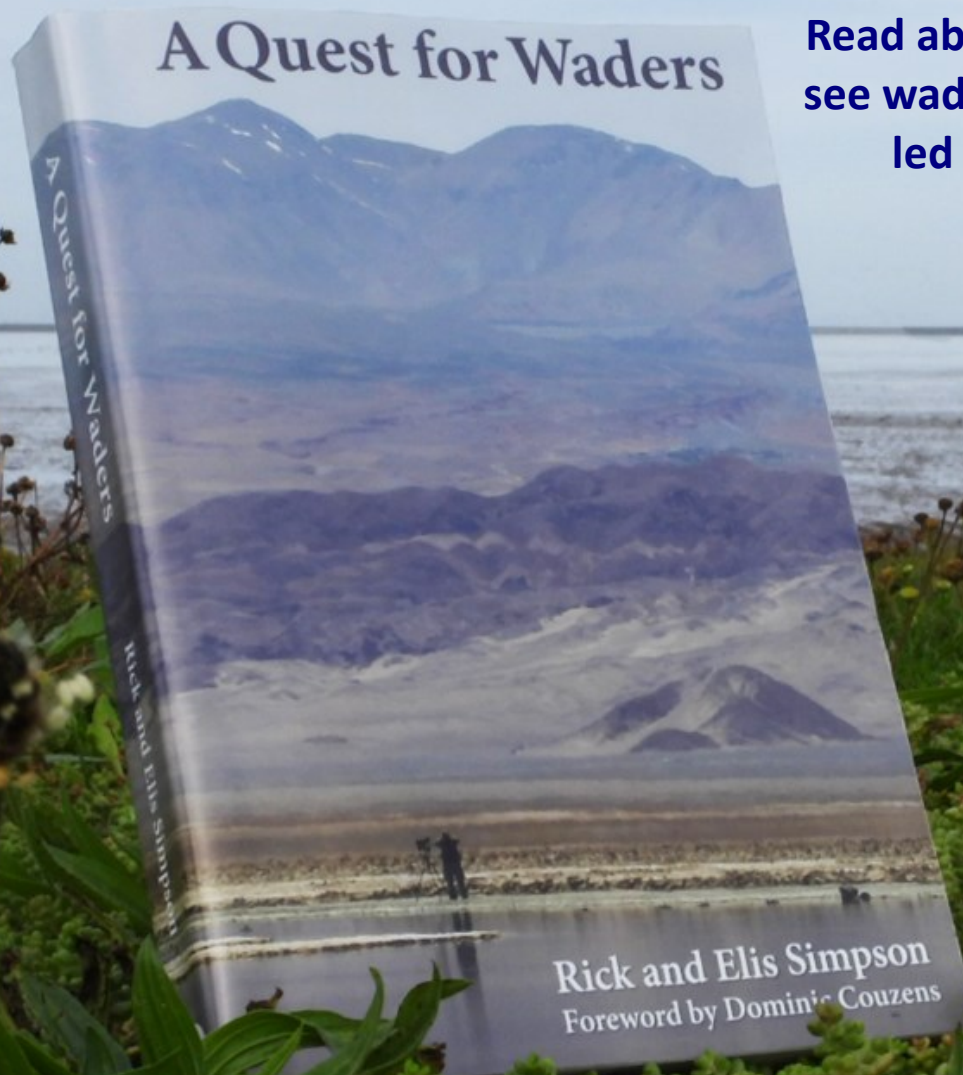
- **Tim Appleton MBE:** Founder of Birdfair Rutland Water and Creator of Rutland Water Nature Reserve.

'I was hooked by the prologue. The tragedy of extinction was brought home to me on seeing, in Morocco in 1990, three of the last few slender-billed curlews to exist. Thanks to the commitment of conservation organisations from around the world and support of people like Rick and Elis the spoon-billed sandpiper has a fighting chance of making it.'

- **Debbie Pain:** Conservationist and Scientist.

Waders are one of the most threatened groups of birds, with several species on the brink of extinction and many more suffering serious declines. This makes Rick and Elis Simpson's Wader Quest – a charity dedicated to protecting waders and highlighting their plight – important and necessary. This fascinating book tells the story of how the organisation grew from their quest to see all the world's waders, before it was too late.'

- **Rebecca Armstrong:** Editor of Birdwatch magazine.



Read about our travels to see waders and how they led to the creation of Wader Quest, the charity.

RRP ~~£13.50~~

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£15.00**

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